

REMARKS

The present Amendment amends claims 21-28, 38, 39, and 42 and leaves claims 29-37, 40, 41, 43 and 44 unchanged. Therefore, the present application has pending claims 21-44.

Claims 21-44 again stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Takaragi (U.S. Patent No. 4,885,788) in view of Mori (U.S. Patent No. 5,659,166). This rejection is traversed for the following reasons. Applicants submit that the features of the present invention as now recited in claims 21-44 are not taught or suggested by Takaragi or Mori whether taken individually or in combination with each other as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Amendments were made to the claims so as to more clearly recite features of the present invention. Particularly, amendments were made to the claims to more clearly recite that the more clearly recite that the IC card includes a plurality of point storage areas wherein each point storage area of a store is formed in corresponding relation to a register store number of the store to permit the point storage area of the store to be accessed using the register store number and a crypt key.

The above described features of the present invention now more clearly recited in the claims are not taught or suggested by any of the references of record whether taken individually or in combination with each other. Particularly, the above described features of the present invention are not taught or suggested by Takaragi or Mori whether taken individually or in combination with each other as suggested by the Examiner.

As argued in the Remarks of the February 9, 2004 Amendment, said Remarks being incorporated herein by reference, there are numerous differences between the features of the present invention as recited in the claims and Takaragi and Mori whether taken individually or in combination with each other as suggested by the Examiner. In addition to these features clearly shown not to be taught or suggested by Takaragi and Mori, said arguments having not been adequately addressed by the Examiner, additional amendments were made to the claims to further distinguish the features of the present invention from the references of record.

It is quite clear and the Examiner readily admits that Takaragi does not teach or suggest that the alleged point application program and IC card can properly distinguish between the point storage areas since there is no teaching or suggestion in Takaragi that each point storage area has identifying information which can be easily accessed to distinguish one point storage area from the other point storage area. In Takaragi, in order to distinguish a point storage area, for example, a store with a decipher key code must read data sequentially from each area and attempt to decipher data stored in the point storage area and when the data is correctly deciphered as meaningful data then and only then can Takaragi assume that it is now accessing the proper point storage area. This operation which is necessary in Takaragi is time consuming and could possibly be faulty.

The present invention overcomes this disadvantage of Takaragi by providing identifying information with respect to each point storage area that can be easily accessed to determine whether the point storage area is the point storage which corresponds to the store of concern without the need for deciphering the point data

stored in the storage area. Such features are clearly not taught or suggested by Takaragi.

Therefore, Takaragi fails to teach or suggest that each point storage area of a store is formed in corresponding relation to a register store number and a crypt key of the store to permit the point storage area of the store to be accessed using the register store number and the crypt key as recited in the claims.

The above noted deficiencies of Takaragi are not supplied by Mori. Thus, combining the teachings of Takaragi and Mori in the manner suggested by the Examiner in the Office Action still fails to teach or suggest the features of the present invention as now more clearly recited in the claims. Therefore, Applicants submit that the present invention as now more clearly recited in the claims are not taught or suggested by the combination of Takaragi and Mori. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC §103(a) rejection of claims 21-44 as being unpatentable over Takaragi in view of Mori is respectfully requested.

The remaining references of record have been studied. Applicants submit that they do not supply any of the deficiencies noted above with respect to the references utilized in the rejection of claims 21-44.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that claims 21-44 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of claims 21-44 is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (501.36884X00).

Respectfully submitted,

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